

January 10, 2007

David Gifford, MD, Director
Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill, Room 401
Providence, RI 02908

Dear Dr. Gifford:

On December 14, 2006, you and I met with representatives from the Developmental Disabilities Nursing Association, Christine Gadbois; Donna Martin, Community Providers Network of RI; Pam McCue, Director, RI Board of Nursing Registration and Nursing Education; and their legal counsel Maureen Hobson, Esquire. I want to thank you for facilitating such a meeting. As a result of this meeting, we were all able to reach a consensus regarding the appropriate standards to be utilized by this Department for nurses employed by agencies licensed by the RI Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals to provide services for adults with developmental disabilities.

As we discussed in the meeting, attached please find the Healthcare Guidelines and Nursing Clinical Standards, January 2, 2001 (the "New Health and Wellness Standards") that will now apply to community settings licensed by the Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals to provide services to adults with developmental disabilities. Beginning January 23, 2007, MHRH will be convening a work group to refine these "new" Health and Wellness Standards. We will be including and outlining staff training expectations. Training of staff in a Developmental Disability community residential setting is a pivotal issue in nursing delegation. As we discussed, under the new Health and Wellness Standards, nurses in the Developmental Disabilities community system are responsible for the process of delegation. Such nurses are not facility based staff. As such, our standards reflect the agency and the nurses' responsibility for the delegation process which will include a training requirement. I will, of course, provide the Department of Health and the RI Board of Nursing Registration and Nursing Education with a final copy of the new Health and Wellness Standards once we have completed the above-described work group process.

As I verbally notified you on December 14, 2006, I am in the process of repealing the former Health and Wellness Standards that were promulgated by Acting Director Spangler in August of 2005. Within the next thirty (30) days, these regulations will be formally repealed in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. Effective immediately, I am instructing my staff to implement the attached "new" Health and Wellness Standards.

It was a pleasure to work collaboratively with you and your staff to resolve this issue in a collegial manner. I look forward to working with you and your department on similar projects in the future.

Best,

Ellen R. Nelson, Ph.D.
Director

ERN:dmg

c: Christine Gadbois
Donna Martin
Pam McCue

Attachments